



NEWS RELEASE

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Corps of Engineers to conduct visitor surveys at the West Thompson Lake Recreation Area this summer

CONCORD, Mass. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will conduct visitor surveys this summer at the West Thompson Lake recreation area in Thompson, Conn. This is part of a nationwide effort to survey visitors at more than 30 Corps-managed recreation areas. Visitors leaving these recreation areas will be asked about their length of stay and overall experience.

Participation in the survey is voluntary. Surveys at five New England sites in Connecticut and Massachusetts will be on various days and at various times between June 14, 2012 and Sept. 2, 2012: West Thompson Lake in Thompson, Conn.; Mansfield Hollow Lake in Mansfield, Conn.; Westville Lake in Sturbridge, Mass.; West Hill Dam in Uxbridge, Mass.; and Buffumville Lake in Charlton, Mass. Surveys at West Thompson will be at the campground site.

These surveys will provide the Corps with baseline information to be used for budgeting and planning purposes. The Corps hopes to learn more about visitor recreation habits to better plan for new trends in the way leisure time is spent at Corps sites. Findings will help ensure that recreation facilities at Corps lakes are operating efficiently to maximize visitor outdoor opportunities and enjoyment.

Interns from the Student Conservation Association will conduct the short interviews (less than 3 minutes) with visitors. The survey has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget. The Corps routinely conducts visitor interviews at its lakes and river projects in an effort to gauge visitors' experiences and concerns.

The Corps is the nation's largest federal provider of outdoor recreation, managing more than 400 lake and river projects in 43 states and hosting more than 370 million visits per year. With 90 percent of these recreation areas within 50 miles of metropolitan areas they provide a diverse range of outdoor activities close to home and to people of all ages. For more information on the survey and Corps recreation sites nationwide, visit www.corpslakes.us/visitorsurvey.

West Thompson Lake is on Route 12 in Thompson. The 200-acre lake has a boat ramp and supports bass, perch, pickerel and horn pout. The campground is open from the third Friday in May through the Sunday after Labor Day and then weekends only through Columbus Day. Fees are

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West Thompson Lake recreation area visitor survey/2-2-2-2-2

charged for use of campsites. Some sites are equipped with water and electricity. Showers and restrooms are barrier free. Camping reservations may be arranged through the National Recreation Reservation Service at 1-877-444-6777 or www.recreation.gov. Three picnic shelters, and several group use areas may be reserved for a fee, on a first come, first serve basis. These three picnic shelters are very popular for outdoor weddings, family birthdays and reunions and other group functions. Group activities such as bass tournaments, field dog trails, and Scout group campouts require a special use permit. An 18-hole disc golf course is available for use by the public free of charge. West Thompson also offers hiking trails, hunting, 5-mile water trail for paddling, and free public programs.

West Thompson Lake dam is located on the Quinebaug River in Thompson. Construction of the \$7 million facility was completed in 1965, and since that time the facility has prevented more than \$56.4 million in flood damages. The 2,550-foot-long, 70-foot-high dam can impound a 1,250-acre pool capable of storing 8.3 billion gallons of water. Picnicking, hiking, boating, fishing, camping, and hunting are enjoyed by over 96,300 visitors annually. The Corps manages 2,059 acres of land and water at West Thompson Lake stretching six miles from Putnam to the Massachusetts border. For more information about West Thompson call 860-923-2982 or check the website at www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/wtl/wtlhome.htm.

The link to the summer survey schedule with times and locations is at: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Recreation/>. For more information about Corps recreation sites in New England District go to the website at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>.

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